

Reduction in Work Force Employee Guide

**Office of Human Resources Employee Relations and Talent Strategy
1590 North High Street, Suite 300
Columbus, OH 43210
614 292-2800**

Office of **HUMAN
RESOURCES**



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Policies

Reduction in Work Force – Unclassified Staff, Policy 9.15, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy915.pdf

Reduction in Work Force – Classified Civil Service Staff, Policy 9.20, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy920.pdf

Staff Severance Program, Policy 2.40, hr.osu.edu/policy/policy240.pdf

Introduction

The Office of Human Resources has provided this information to assist those affected by Reduction in Force. We hope you find this to be a valuable tool for you during the separation process.

The booklet contains information to help guide you. Included is a list of internal resources available to you. We encourage you to take advantage of the resources provided by The Ohio State University. The booklet also has guidelines for internal and external job search strategies, with sample resumes included. In addition, the booklet provides questions and answers surrounding benefits options.

The Office of Human Resources is available to assist you with consultation on employment services, benefit continuation, job search techniques, and referral to counseling. For questions, please contact Office of Human Resources, 614-292-2800.

University Resources

Office of Human Resources Benefits Services

1590 N. High Street, Suite 300, 614-292-1050, benefits@hr.osu.edu

- Continuing benefits coverage
- Retirement information
- Unemployment process

Office of Human Resources Employee Relations and Talent Strategy

1590 N. High Street, suite 300, 614-292-2800, ohrc@hr.osu.edu

- Assistance in understanding reduction in force or layoff policies and procedures
- Explains processes of appeal and displacement, if applicable
- Information and assistance regarding employment policies, procedures and campus employment opportunities

Online Career Site

jobs.osu.edu

- Listing of new and vacant positions that are available at the university
- Updated weekly

Ohio State Employee Assistance Program (Ohio State EAP)

700 Ackerman Rd., Suite 580, 614-292-4700, osuhealthplan.com/OhioStateEAP

- Short-term counseling and assessment for employees dealing with the emotional stresses resulting from a change in job status
- Confidential counseling and referral services

Contact Information

You may wish to note specific contact information in the spaces provided below.

Office of Human Resources
1590 North High Street
Columbus, OH 43201-2190
Phone: 614-292-2800

Contact Name: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

Ohio State University Employee Assistance Program (Ohio State EAP)
700 Ackerman Road, Suite 580
Columbus, OH 43202
Phone: 614-292-4700

Contact Name: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

Contact Name: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

Contact Name: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

Contact Name: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

Contact Name: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____
E-mail: _____

Frequently Asked Questions

1. When should I apply for Unemployment Compensation?

You should file a claim as soon as you become unemployed. You may file your claim online at unemployment.ohio.gov or by telephone at 877-644-6562. For more information visit the ODJFS web site at: unemployment.ohio.gov. Your claim will begin the Sunday of the calendar week in which it is filed. Waiting more than a full week to file your application will postpone the beginning of your claim and no benefits will be paid for weeks of unemployment that occurred prior to the week of filing.

2. What do I need in order to file an unemployment claim?

You should be prepared to provide the following information when you file an application:

- Your social security number and either your driver's license or state ID number
- Your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address
- Dependents' names, social security numbers and dates of birth
- The address of The Ohio State University and the dates of your employment

The Ohio State University
Office of Human Resources
1590 N. High Street, Suite 300
Columbus, Ohio 43201-2190

3. How much unemployment will I receive?

Approximately fifty percent of your average weekly wage as defined by ODJFS, not to exceed the state's annually established maximum level. This maximum level is based on (1) the statewide average weekly wage, (2) the applicant's base period wages, and (3) the number of [allowable dependents](#).

4. How long will it take before I receive my first unemployment check?

Ohio law requires that you serve a one-week waiting period after filing a new application for benefits. The waiting week is the first week claimed that meets all of the eligibility requirements – no benefits are paid for this week. It may take up to four weeks from the date you file your initial claim to receive the first payment. The earliest your payment may be issued is during the third week.

5. How long may I receive unemployment compensation?

The current maximum period is 26 weeks. However, the number of benefit weeks you are entitled to depends on the number of qualifying weeks you have earned in your base period. ODJFS will calculate this for you. **Note:** On November 21, 2008 the federal "Unemployment Compensation Extension Act of 2008" was signed into law. This act extended emergency unemployment compensation benefits from 13 to 20 weeks. It also provided for an additional 13 weeks of federal compensation for individuals in states with high unemployment rates, including Ohio. The ODJFS Office of Unemployment Compensation will notify qualifying individuals of their eligibility under this new extended benefit program. The most recent updated from OSJFS as of December 17, 2009, individuals who have exhausted their regular 26 weeks of unemployment after December 19 will not be eligible for any federal extended benefits. Individuals who have exhausted their extended benefits after December 26, 2009 will not be eligible for any additional extended benefits. For current updates on the extension visit: unemployment.ohio.gov.

6. Will I be paid for unused vacation?

Pay out of unused vacation will be made on your last paycheck. The maximum payout is 240 hours for unclassified professional staff and up to the amount earned in the three years of service just completed for classified civil service staff.

7. What happens to my unused sick time?

There is no pay out of unused sick time; however, if you should return to work for a state entity within ten years, the forfeited hours would be reinstated. In order to be reinstated for your sick time, documentation of your balance is required.

8. Do I get paid for unused compensatory time?

Yes. Your department will notify Payroll Services of the number of compensatory time hours that are to be paid. This will appear on your last pay.

9. Do I need to do anything with my Ohio Public Employees Retirement Systems (OPERS) account?

- Defined Benefit Plan (Traditional)
OPERS will maintain an account in your name until you qualify for monthly retirement benefits, request a rollover to another qualified account, or request and receive a refund of your contributions.
- Defined Contribution (Member Directed) and Combined Plans
OPERS will maintain an account in your name until you qualify for monthly retirement benefits, request a rollover to another qualified account, or request and receive a refund of your contributions. If your account balance is less than \$5,000 OPERS will charge inactivity fees.

10. What are the OPERS retirement eligibility rules?

- Defined Benefit (Traditional) and Combined Plans
If you are age 60 with at least five years of retirement service credit, or age 55 with at least 25 years of retirement service credit, or any age with 30 or more years of retirement service credit, you are eligible for monthly pension benefits from OPERS.
- Defined Contribution (Member Directed) Plan
You may begin receiving retirement plan benefits on or after age 55.

If you are eligible to retire according to the above eligibility rules and are interested in retirement from the university, contact OPERS at 1-800-222-7377. After you have confirmed you are eligible to retire, contact the Office of Human Resources, Benefits Services at 292-1050, for information regarding benefits and retirement procedures.

11. How can I withdraw my OPERS contributions?

OPERS requires that this request be in writing after a 90 day break in service. Each OPERS plan has its own refund request form that can be obtained by calling OPERS at 1-800-222-7377 or by going online to opers.org/forms and selecting “refunds”. Be sure to check your income tax liability if you receive a refund.

12. May I withdraw only part of my OPERS contributions?

No. If you choose to receive a refund, you must withdraw all of the contributions.

13. Am I required to withdraw my OPERS contributions if I am unable to retire at this time?

No. You may leave them with OPERS. This could qualify you for a retirement benefit in the future or provide other benefits such as disability income. Please see question #9 above regarding inactivity fees for the Defined Contribution (Member Directed) and Combined Plans. For more information about your OPERS benefits contact OPERS at 1-800-222-7377.

14. How can I withdraw my Alternative Retirement Program (ARP) contributions?

If you have an ARP account and terminate your employment with Ohio State you will need to contact your ARP vendor and indicate that you will no longer be making contributions to your account. You have the option to leave your account with your current vendor, move your money to another qualified account or to receive a refund of your contributions.

15. What access do I have to a Supplemental Retirement Account (SRA)?

In addition to federal guidelines, each carrier has their own set of rules and policies. Please contact your SRA vendor to discuss your options. Please note withdrawing your funds may carry state and federal tax consequences and possible penalties. For a list of SRA vendors go to hr.osu.edu/benefits/retirevendors.pdf.

16. Am I still eligible to utilize funds contributed to my Flexible Spending Account (FSA)?

Yes. Only expenses incurred through your last day of employment are eligible for reimbursement. All claims must be filed by the plan year's deadline, which is March 31 of every year.

17. Can I withdraw my unused funds from my FSA?

No. Funds may only be used to reimburse eligible expenses as outlined by the IRS. Any funds remaining in your account after the plan year's deadline must be forfeited as required by IRS guidelines. If you continue your coverage with a COBRA election, you may be eligible to continue participating in the FSA program.

18. How can I continue my health insurance?

Both Ohio and federal law provide for insurance continuation. You may continue medical, dental and vision insurance for up to 18 months by enrolling in COBRA continuation of coverage. You will be required to pay monthly premiums to continue this coverage. Coverage is not automatic and therefore, requires that you complete a "COBRA Election Form" which can be found at hr.osu.edu/forms. The election form must be completed within 60 days from the date of your separation from the university.

19. Can I continue Group Term Life Insurance?

Group Term Life Insurance may be converted to an individual policy without proof of insurability. To obtain more information, contact Anthem Life Insurance at 1-800-551-7265 and complete their application within 31 days of your separation from the university.

20. How will this affect my employee tuition assistance benefits?

If you are affected by a reduction-in-force while participating in the employee tuition assistance program, you will be granted an extension of your eligibility for the remainder of that quarter only.

21. What happens to dependent tuition assistance eligibility?

If your dependents are currently eligible, they will remain eligible for the remainder of the quarter during which you were terminated.

Job Search Techniques

Resume Writing

To write an effective resume, you must first understand the purpose of a resume. A resume is the key that opens the door to an interview. Your resume is the “advertisement” that excites the “buyer” (the hiring manager) to examine and evaluate the “product” (you). It doesn’t matter what position you are applying for, your resume must highlight your skills, accomplishments, and work experience in a way that distinguishes you from the thousands of other candidates applying for positions. A good resume presents a thumbnail sketch of your past experience. A winning resume grabs the reader’s attention and increases your chances of being called in for an interview.

Great resumes entice hiring managers, interesting them with the following components:

- A brief summary of your qualifications, strengths, and skills
- Selected accomplishments and your most relevant industry expertise
- Work experience chronologically (with titles and dates)
- Computer and related technical skills
- Professional affiliations
- College and post-graduate education (if applicable)

As you begin your job search process, you may find that your past experience is not as applicable or valuable in the current marketplace as it once was. Your first step should be to define your experiences so you can better sell yourself. There are many online resources available to assist you in determining your talents and identifying what skills are in demand in the current job market. The Business Reference section at your local library will also provide you with additional resources. You must present your strengths in a clear and concise manner. Make interviewers excited about you!

Your resume should be on white or off-white paper in a single conservative font such as Times Roman, Arial or any other clear and easy-to read typeface. Resume readers do not take kindly to additional eyestrain, so avoid very small or very large print, constant changes in point-size and italics. Use bold lettering sparingly, so it does not lose its impact. Put your name at the top of each page with a page number. Keep top, bottom, left, and right margins at about one inch each. Keep the resume between one and two pages – any additional information can be provided at the interview.

If your field warrants it, you might also have a separate “technical profile” of hardware, software, protocols, and/or programming languages. This is especially a good idea for those in high-technology fields. As a general rule, the hotter the skill, the earlier on the list it should go. And if you happen to know what skills a job requires you can put them first. These lists can be placed directly after the “summary” or after the body of your resume “work experience” and before the “education” section.

Your “work experience” can be listed in two different ways. There is the “functional resume” which centers on your skills and accomplishments. This might be a good choice if your work was as a contract worker or a consultant. This style of resume focuses on results and accomplishments. For example, you can list areas where you saved the business money or solved problems on the job. You can also list publication credits, courses taught, and sales goals exceeded.

The most common resume format is the “chronological resume”. A chronological resume begins with a description of your most recent position followed by all other work experiences. The section outlining your “education” should be placed at the bottom of your resume, highest degree first, followed by lesser degrees, certifications, and relevant coursework. The exception is when you are a recent graduate with no work experience; in that case your education should go right under the “summary”. As soon as you have even six months to one year of work experience place your education at the very end.

Ending the resume with the phrase, “references available on request” is optional, although many applications include a place for references. It is also suggested you bring your list of references with you to the interview. Type the reference page in the same font and on the same paper as your resume. Your references should be listed in alphabetical order and include the contact’s name, title, organization, address, and phone number.

Writing a great resume can be difficult. It can be hard to be objective about yourself. Even harder, still, to use the right buzz-words to add value and marketability to your work history. If you realize that you have been procrastinating or sweat profusely whenever you sit in front of a computer screen to compile your career into two life-changing pages, it’s probably time to seek resume writing assistance. There are many online resources available to guide you. Use keywords like “resume writing” or “job search techniques” in your internet searches and contact OHR Talent Strategy at 614-292-2800 if you have additional questions.

Sample: Functional Resume Outline

Name
Address
City, State Zip
Phone

Summary: Seasoned professional with ____ years of experience...

This section should highlight your applicable strengths

Technical Profile: *If appropriate, list your technical skills here*

Hardware: IBM...

Software: Windows, MS Office...

Employment History:

- *Bullet point list of specific skills and accomplishments*
- *Implemented quality control measures that cut the percentage...(example)*

1995-present Name of Company, Title *(list most recent employer first)*

1990-1995 Name of Company, Title

(To make a great impression, your resume should highlight your past 10 to 12 years of relevant work experience, and then summarize any previous positions)

Education: List your most recent educational experiences first

****The font for this example is Arial 11****

Sample: Chronological Resume Outline

Name
Address
City, State Zip
Phone

Summary: Seasoned professional with ___ years of experience...

This section should highlight your applicable strengths

Technical Profile: *If appropriate, list your technical skills here*

Hardware: IBM...

Software: Windows, MS Office

Employment History: *list most recent employer first*

1995-present Title	Name of Company	City, State
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Either bullet point responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills or write out a brief paragraph discussing your responsibilities, accomplishments, and skills. If you write in paragraph form, make sure you are consistently using appropriate punctuation and grammar.

As Senior Consultant, reported to _____ and responsible for the ... (example)

(To make a great impression, your resume should highlight your past 10 to 12 years of relevant work experience, and then summarize any previous positions)

Education: *List your most recent educational experience first*

****The font for this example is Times New Roman 11****

Interviews

Sometimes your first contact with either an Ohio State department human resource contact or an outside company will be over the phone, a telephone interview. He or she will not hire you over the phone, but they may decide not to hire you – so be prepared! Make sure you are on time – if the interviewer says he or she is going to call between 10 a.m. and noon on Saturday, be there ready to take the call. What else should you do to prepare for the phone interview?

- Take steps to get background noise to a minimum – background noise can be very distracting and can imply that you are disorganized
- Research the company and or department – Ohio State department information can be found on the web (osu.edu) while external corporate information is available on company websites, from your public library, or by calling the company's public relations department
- Keep a copy of your resume in your hand
- Have a pencil and paper ready to take notes on what they are looking for and any questions you might have
- Prepare questions ahead of time
- Be prepared to give them a choice of three times you are available for a face-to-face interview

At least one face-to-face interview will be called for and perhaps more than one will be required. Not all interviews are conducted one-on-one. Some departments/companies will ask you to meet with a series of individuals, or they may ask you to meet with all of those individuals assembled in one room. Adequate preparation is a great antidote to any nervousness this might cause (Appendix).

1. Before you go into your interview, prepare your resume carefully and be ready to answer both general and specific questions. Bring at least two (2) copies of your resume with you and two (2) copies of your list of references. Prepare a list of job related questions. The interviewer does not need to get the impression that all you are looking for is the money and/or benefits. Do not mention money or benefits at this stage of the interview process. Remember that you are trying to show the interviewer(s) what you can do for them, not question them to see if they have what you want.
2. The interviewer wants to know that you view this chance to become part of their department or organization as a great opportunity, and that you know and care what the organization's needs are. One tangible way to demonstrate this interest is by talking about the research you did in advance at your local library or on the internet. Consult their web site; pick up annual reports, magazine articles, and professional journals to give you insight into the business. By knowing the employer you will be able to ask intelligent questions about the company and the position.
3. Do not be modest or shy. Tell them your strengths. For example, if they are moving toward a high performance culture environment and you have related experience, tell them where and when you did this – and what great results you obtained. Emphasize those areas in your experience that will solve customer's problems and meet their needs.
4. Re-summarize the job description. Get them to expand on the job description and explain how your skills relate to their qualifications.

Close the interview. "I am very interested in this position. When can I expect to hear back from you?" Express your sincere interest in the department/company and the position. Always send a follow-up/thank you letter immediately after your interview.

Many organizations like Ohio State use a behavioral based interview style. The questions you are asked by an interviewer will require you to provide **real-life examples** of what you have done in **specific** situations. For example, you may be asked to describe a time when you were not going to meet a deadline. You will be asked to explain the **situation**, your **action** (the steps you took to work through it), and the **result**. Most departments/companies are looking for candidates who can demonstrate the following qualities:

- Leadership abilities – you can take charge in a situation
- Technical skills – you can do the work involved in the job
- Teamwork – able to work in a group effort
- Flexibility – willing to be flexible and juggle priorities to get the job done
- Motivation – determined to work hard and succeed
- Communication – effective and clear communicator and able to get your point across
- Intellectual competence – general problem solving skills

Internet Postings

For more external exposure, you may decide to post your resume with one of the many Internet-based services (Appendix). By posting your background on the internet, you will significantly increase the number of people who will see it throughout the United States. While you are searching the sites listed, check out the various companies' open positions. There may be some external opportunities for you on the Internet.

It is important to note that when searching electronically, companies look for key words on resumes to locate candidates who match a position's qualifications. Be sure to state your most relevant skills and accomplishments using concise language. If a company's computer is programmed to search for the word "finance" in a resume database, for example, and your resume states that you "managed financial accounts and services", you won't match up. Check in the Career Section at your local library for books or look online to identify resources on how to write "electronic resumes". There are reference materials that will help you write resumes specifically to be placed on the internet.

Additional Resources

Cover Letter: Do's and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Address the letter to a specific individual whenever possible.	Use awkward salutations such as "To whom it may concern" or "Dear Sir or Madam".
Develop a bridge between yourself and the employer at the very beginning by explaining how you learned of the vacancy.	Begin each sentence or paragraph with "I".
Give a brief statement emphasizing your qualifications for this position. Keep the whole letter to about 3 to 4 paragraphs.	Write too long of a letter.
Customize the letter and contact person for each company.	Write a generic letter, send a customized letter to the wrong company, nor forget to sign the letter.
Have someone look it over.	Rely on "spell check"; it will not catch everything.
	Reference other companies in your cover letter
Know your source	Make reference to ads that were never placed.

Resume: Do's and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Include grade point average, both cumulative and major (if applicable).	Lie about your grade point average.
Have a broad objective covering the skills you would like to use. Specialize the resume if you know exactly where the resume is going (if you decide to have an objective).	Make your objective so specific that some companies/departments will pass over you.
Keep the resume brief. Cover all the essential information clearly.	Assume the longer the resume, the more qualified you must be.
Proofread carefully for spelling, punctuation, and typos. Have someone else proofread as well.	Rely on "spell check"; it will not catch everything.
Proofread your resume from an outsider's perspective. Does it make sense?	Use familiar abbreviations or unnecessary jargon.
Focus on relevant, job-related school activities and work experience.	List personal statistics such as your weight, height, and age.
Send a Thank You note even if you are not interested in the position.	Handwrite your resume.
	Copy it so many times that it is illegible.
	Use colored ink.
	Fax your resume from your current employer during regular business hours or use your current employer's letterhead.
	Leave unprofessional messages on the answering machine if you are putting your home number on your resume.

Vital Questions to Ask in an Interview

Applicants should be prepared to ask relevant questions at the end of each interview. Prepared applicants are able to walk away from an interview feeling that they know everything there is to know about the particular job, department, and organization. The information received in an interview will assist you in making an intelligent career choice.

1. What are the department's/company's strengths and weaknesses compared to its competition?
2. How important does upper management (your supervisor) consider the functions of this department? (You need to know if the department is low on the totem pole for budget expenditures and growth.)
3. Are there any weaknesses in the department that the manager is working on improving? (Try to determine the environment of the job.)
4. What is the organization's plan (mission) for the next five years and how does this department fit in?
5. Could you explain the organizational structure to me? (What is the reporting structure in this department? What are acceptable channels of communication? Ask for an organizational chart.)
6. How will my performance be measured? By whom? (How will I be evaluated?)
7. What are the day-to-day responsibilities in this job? (You don't want any surprises).
8. Could you describe your management style and the type of employee who works well with you?
9. What are some of the skills and abilities you see as necessary for someone to succeed in this job? (You are trying to find out what qualities and talents your boss values versus what the job description requires.)
10. What is the company's policy on providing seminars and workshops so employees can keep up with or acquire new skills?
11. Are there any restraints or cutbacks planned that would decrease the budget?
12. What particular computer equipment and software do you use?
13. What is your training/orientation process like? (How will I be acclimated to my new role?)

Internet Sites for Job Seekers

The internet can be a great tool/resource for you during your job search. Not only are companies posting positions on the internet, but there are also internet sites out there to help you write your cover letter and resume and prepare for an interview (e.g. careers.wsj.com). Go to Google.com and you can type in any search word you want (e.g. resume) and Google will pull up all the resources they have linked to the word resume. If you haven't used the internet before it may seem overwhelming. But once you start using it, you won't want to stop!

Below we have listed a handful of internet job sites. These are just a few of the more common job sites. You have the option to look at the positions companies have posted or you can "post" your resume on these sites.

Internet Sites	Address
CareerBuilder	www.careerbuilder.com
Columbus Jobs.com	www.columbusjobs.com/monster
CareerPath.com	www.careerpath.com
ComputerJobs.com	www.computerjobs.com
Dice.com	www.dice.com
HigherEdjobs.com	www.higheredjobs.com
Monster.com	www.monster.com
National Diversity Recruitment Services HireDiversity.com	www.hirediversity.com
University Job Bank	www.ujobbank.com
Yahoo Hot Jobs	www.hotjobs.yahoo.com